

**ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE OF PENITENCE AND RENEWAL**

**FEBRUARY 22, 2023 • 7:00 p.m.**

“Correctly understood, repentance is not negative but positive. It means not self-pity or remorse but conversion, the re-centering of our whole upon the Trinity. It is to look not backward with regret but forward with hope — not downwards at our own shortcomings, but upwards at God’s love. It is to see, not what we have failed to be, but what by divine grace we can now become; and it is to act upon what we see. To repent is to open our eyes to the light. In this sense, repentance is not just a single act, an initial step, but a continuing state, an attitude of heart and will that needs to be ceaselessly renewed up to the end of life.”

Kalistos Ware, *The Orthodox Way*

**Prelude** *Jesu, Priceless Treasure* Martha Eshelman & Carol Manion

**Invitation to a Time of Silent Reflection** Rev. Stuart Spencer  
*During this time, take a moment to breathe and to reflect on where you’ve come from. Consider one or two of these prompts as you reflect:*

- *Talk to the Lord about the kind of day you’ve had. Describe it to Him.*
- *Talk to the Lord about how you are feeling right now.*
- *Ask the Lord to speak to you this evening.*
- *Ask the Lord to reveal more of Himself to you.*

*Be patient and wait for the Lord. Don’t rush to fill silence.*

**Song** *Hymn to Him* DeMucci  
Rev. Wes Allen, Guitar

**Welcome, Work of God’s People, and Prayer** Rev. Spencer

**\*Hymn No. 532 - Be Thou My Vision** Carol Manion, Piano

**Scripture Reading** Ezekiel 9:1-11

**Song** *God’s Gonna Cut You Down* Cash  
Wes Allen, Guitar

**Prayer of Confession (Unison)** Rev. Spencer

**Holy Lord, we come before You today with subtle sighs and heavy groans seeking Your forgiveness. Forgive our apathy and indifference to the evil plaguing our society - for not loving our enemies, for deciding who belongs and who does not in Your Church, and for failing to be ambassadors of Your radical love and reconciliation. Lord, we deserve to be “cut down”; but through the blood of Christ, You have marked us, forgiven us, and You equip us through Your Spirit to shine the light of Christ amidst the darkness of our world. Transform and empower us to be Your fervent disciples. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen!**

**Time of Silent Reflection**

*Consider the sackcloth. Feel the rough fabric against your skin. Throughout the Bible, sackcloth was made from coarse goat hair, which was itchy and uncomfortable to wear. People would wear clothing made of sackcloth when they were really sad and upset about their sins. Talk to the Lord and ask God to help you see clearly your own sins.*

- *Which sins in your life make you feel sad, uncomfortable, or upset?*
- *Which sins in your life are you comfortable with? Which sins are you dabbling in?*
- *How does your sin impact your life? How does it impact those around you?*
- *How might you “yell a loud ‘No!’ to the devil”?*
- *If you had a humble spirit, what would that look like?*
- *What is God saying to you?*

**Invitation**  
*During this song, you are invited to place your piece of sackcloth at the foot of the cross as a sign of your desire to leave your sins.*

**Song** *The Cross* Nelson  
Wes Allen, Guitar

**Declaration of Forgiveness (Adapted from Joel 12:12-14)** Rev. Spencer  
“Even now,” declares the LORD, “return to Me with all your heart with fasting and weeping and mourning. Rend your heart and not your garments.” Return to the LORD your God, for He is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love; and He will relent from sending calamity.”

The Good News in Christ is that when we face ourselves and God with awareness of ourselves, we are given grace to grow and courage to continue the journey.

**Friends, believe the Good News. In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven!**

**Scripture Reading** *II Corinthians 5:20b-6:10* Rev. Wes Allen

**Sermon** *"A Cross to Bear"* Rev. Allen

**Solo** *What Wondrous Love is This?* Linda Wells  
Evelyn Santiago-Schulz Carol Manion

**Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper & Imposition of Ashes**  
*During the hymn, you are invited to come forward and receive the mark of the cross in ashes on your forehead as a reminder of your new life in Jesus Christ. After receiving the mark of the cross, please procure the communion cup and bread and return to your seat. We will partake of communion together.*

**Hymn No. 568 - Take My Life and Let it Be Consecrated** Carol Manion, Piano

**\*Benediction** Wes Allen

**Postlude** Carol Manion  
*Exit in prayerful silence.*

*\*Those who are able are invited to stand.*

**Ushers:** John Miller, Jack Terry

**Musicians:** Wes Allen, Carol Manion, Martha Eshelman

**Sound Technician:** Harris E. Ransom

**Live stream Technician:** Dan Carson

*We Invite You to Worship with Us During Holy Week*

- **Maundy Thursday Worship – Thursday, April 6 ~ 7:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary.** We commemorate the Last Supper Jesus shared with His disciples before His crucifixion, when He instituted the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper and gave a new commandment.
- **Good Friday Tenebrae Service – Friday, April 7 ~** Join us for a moving Tenebrae Service in the Sanctuary at 7:30 p.m., commemorating Jesus' crucifixion on Calvary.
- **Easter Worship – Sunday, April 9, 2023 ~** An uplifting message, glorious music, and joy of the Resurrected King! Celebrate with three Easter Worship Services: 6:30 a.m. Sunrise (Cemetery); 8:30 a.m. Traditional (Sanctuary); and 11:00 a.m. Contemporary (Commons). There is no Sunday School nor Adult Education on Easter.

*"The LORD God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and the man became a living being."*

*Genesis 2:7*

**Ash Wednesday Service  
of Penitence and Renewal**

**February 22, 2023**



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